

Brian Barker
President

Gail Dunn
Vice President

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Vice President



Bare Essentials

October 2020

**A good teacher
can inspire hope,
ignite the
imagination, and
instill a love of
learning.**

-Brad Henry

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Happy World Teachers' Day

In 2020, World Teachers' Day will celebrate teachers with the theme "**Teachers: Leading in crisis, reimagining the future**". The day provides the occasion to celebrate the teaching profession worldwide, take stock of achievements, and draw attention to the voices of teachers, who are at the heart of efforts to attain the global education target of leaving no one behind.

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly added to the challenges faced by already over-extended education systems throughout the world. It is no exaggeration to say that the world is at a crossroads and, now more than ever, we must work with teachers to protect the right to education and guide it into the unfolding landscape brought about by the pandemic.

The issue of teacher leadership in relation to crisis responses is not just timely, but critical in terms of the contributions teachers have made to provide remote learning, support vulnerable populations, re-open schools, and ensure that learning gaps have been mitigated. The discussions surrounding WTD will also address the role of teachers in building resilience and shaping the future of education and the teaching profession.



On behalf of everyone at the office, we want to let you know **you are making a difference in the lives of Niagara children and families**. We wish you a Happy World Teachers' Day and hope you know how much your dedication, creativity, and compassion are appreciated!

Remember to report any Health and Safety concerns to your Administrator, as well as your Health and Safety Rep.



COVID-19 FAQ

Here are some important FAQs that ETFO Provincial released for members, which may also be concerns facing Niagara teachers:

- My large class size does not allow for physical distancing in my classroom. What can I do to pressure the school board to address this issue?
- A social media outlet has asked educators to share concerns about the lack of physical distancing in their classrooms. Can I post photos of my classroom or concerns publicly?
- Can I wear my own mask that I have made because it is more comfortable?
- My colleague is not wearing a mask in the halls or following the entry/exit directions. Should I say something?
- As a French teacher I'm in contact with over 150 students in a week in various classrooms. What are my responsibilities for contact tracing if an outbreak occurs?
- I am being asked to disinfect the high touch surfaces in my classroom as well as clean the washroom after the children use it. Am I expected to do this?
- Why do I need to clean and disinfect manipulatives between each use if the students in K-3 are not wearing masks and physical distancing cannot be maintained? Won't the virus spread despite our efforts?

The answers to these important member questions can be found by following this link: [COVID-19 FAQs](#)

Reminder:

Niagara Public Health makes all decisions related to the necessity to isolate at home and what members of the family need to self-isolate. If you or a family member do not pass the Covid-19 Self-Assessment, and you have questions or concerns, please call their Information Line at **1-888-505-6074 and press '7'. From there, educators can press '4' for more information.**

Fall General Meeting

ETFO Niagara will be hosting their first General Meeting of the year on Wednesday, November 4, 2020, from 4:30 - 6PM. Due to COVID-19, and current provincial regulations in place for large gatherings, the meeting will take place virtually. To register for the meeting, please sign up via Eventbrite at <https://etfoniagarafallgm2021.eventbrite.ca>. If you could register by Wednesday, October 28, 2020, it would be greatly appreciated. Keep your eye out for a poster in your staffroom in the upcoming weeks.



Collective Agreement 101

Access to Sick Days:

You have access to **11 sick days each year** at 100% salary. If you are experiencing a longer illness or injury and are absent for more than 5 consecutive days, you will be required to submit a medical note to your Wellness Advisor at HR.

After you have used 11 sick days, on your 12th day absent (whether consecutive or separate) you will then begin to access from your bank of 120 Short Term Disability sick days at 90% of your salary. However, if you had not used all 11 sick days the previous school year, you will have access to those to top up to 100% salary.

Example: If you had 2 sick days remaining from the 2019-20 school year and you needed to access your Short Term Disability days, the first 20 days you would receive 100% of your salary.

Mental Health Matters

For Members:

September has been overwhelming to say the least, both in the Virtual School and in the physical buildings. With new expectations for teaching, new technology to learn, and new safety protocols to follow, the workload and stress of teaching in a global pandemic can have negative effects on your mental health and well-being. Here are some resources that are available to help and support you:

- You can access your EFAP (Employee and Family Assistance Program), through the Employee Portal. Click on 'Departments' and then, 'Employee Wellness'. Other great information and resources are available here.
- You can access [Feeling Better Now](#) from OTIP. This tool can help you identify if you should seek support and includes a questionnaire that you can fill out and print to bring with you to medical appointments.



Supporting Student Mental Health:

As educators, we know that in order for students to learn effectively, they need to experience both physical and mental well-being. During these uncertain times, you may find that more of your students are struggling with their ability to manage stress and could use coping skills to safeguard their mental wellness. Below are some links that you can access to help support your students:

- Children's Mental Health Ontario [Teacher Resources](#)
- Return to School Journal [Big Life Journal Download](#)

A Healthy O-TIP:

Don't make these 5 common renovation mistakes!

Renovating can make your home or office feel fresh, new and inviting. It's an exciting opportunity to dream about your ideal space and make it a reality. If you're going through the time, effort and expense to renovate, make sure you do it right the first time around by avoiding these five common mistakes.

Learn more at www.otipinsurance.com/article83



PRS MATTERS

Social Media:

Social Media sites such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter are great tools that we all use to share ideas, celebrations, and sometimes frustrations. As teachers, we often use these platforms to share learning with families and our school communities.

Before you click 'share', there are some important responsibilities to follow:

- Ensure that you have signed permission from parents/guardians before posting student photos.
- Ensure that student names do not appear (e.g., on certificates, name tags on desks) by blurring them or covering them.

For more information about using electronic communication and social media platforms please click [here](#).



Family of Schools Representatives

Were you aware that we have four members on our Local Executive who represent a Family of Schools? If you have questions or concerns that are not urgent, but you would like them brought forward at our monthly Executive Meeting, have your School Steward reach out to your Representative. They will bring these items to the Executive Table so we can provide information or work on your behalf to problem-solve issues. See the chart below to find your worksite's Family of Schools Prep.

Laurie Adam (Orchard Park)	Jen Irwin (Gainsborough)	Tracey Storr (Kate S Durdan)	Paul Waldie (Parnall)
Applewood Burleigh Hill Carleton Connaught Dalewood El McCulley Ferdale Harriet Tubman Jeanne Sauve Lincoln Centennial Lockview Oakridge Parnall Pine Grove Port Weller Power Glen Prince of Wales (N) Prince Philip (N) William Hamilton Merritt Virtual School 1	Caistor Central Central Curriculum Support DSBN Academy Edith Cavell Gainsborough Gracefield Grand Avenue Grapeview Jacob Beam Lakeview Nelles Park Senator Gibson Smith Smithville Spec Ed Support Twenty Valley Westdale Woodland	Cherrywood Acres Crossroads Forestview Garrison Road Greendale Heximer Avenue James Morden John Brant John Marshall Kate S Durdan Martha Cullimore Orchard Park Peace Bridge Prince Philip (S) Princess Margaret River View Simcoe Street St. Davids Stevensville Valley Way Victoria (NF)	A.K. Wigg DeWitt Carter Diamond Trail Fitch Street Glendale Glynn A. Green Gordon McKay Oakwood Ontario Plymouth Prince of Wales (S) Princess Elizabeth Quaker Road Richmond Street Ross Steele Street W.E. Brown Wellington Heights Westmount Winger Virtual School 2

****We are seeking members to fill the role of Steward in our Virtual Schools. If you are interested please email Tena at: admin@etfoniagara.ca**

Reminder: When you are contacting your steward, your Executive Representative, or the ETFO Local Office by email, please **use your personal email address** and **not** your board email.

Changes to Your Personal Information

Do you have any changes to your personal information that are on file at the ETFO Office? This includes a new address, name change, phone number, Board email address, and personal email address. If this is the case, please fill out a "Change of Personal Information Form" which can be found on our website www.etfoniagara.ca and submit it to Tena at admin@etfoniagara.ca. This will ensure you continue to receive important communications from our local ETFO office.

Save The Date!

Wednesday, November
4th

- Fall General Meeting

Sunday, December 6th
(Tentatively)

- Annual ETFO Niagara Winter Festravaganza

Remember to follow
[@etfoniagara](https://www.instagram.com/etfoniagara) on:



ETFO Niagara Executive Member Spotlight

Each month we will be highlighting our Executive Members so that you can get to know the teachers representing you and working on your behalf. This month we are going to begin with our three Released Officers.

Brian Barker - President



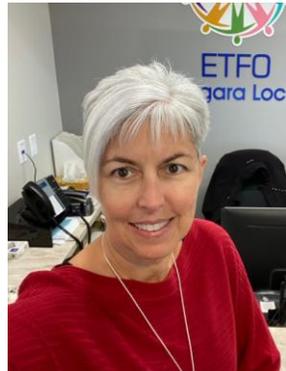
Years as a Teacher: 19, eight as a released officer

ETFO Responsibilities: Brian is our Grievance Officer, Staffing Lead, and Chairs the Constitutional Review Committee. He is the Committee Liaison for our Secretary, Political Action Chair, and Health & Safety Chair. Brian also oversees Communications to Members, Tech and Infrastructure, and LTD/Wellness.

Favourite Educational Quote: "Do not go where the path may lead; go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Favourite Hobby: Playing hockey and guitar (but not at the same time!)

Gail Dunn - Vice President (Female)



Years as a Teacher: 33, six as a released officer

ETFO Responsibilities: Gail is our Financial Officer, Chief Negotiator, and Chairs the Budget Committee. She is the Committee Liaison for our Treasurer, Equity Chair, Status of Women Chair, and Elections Chair. Gail also oversees New Teacher Program Planning, Goodwill, and Special Events.

Favourite Educational Quote: "Children are apt to live up to whatever you believe of them." ~ Lady Byrd Johnson

Favourite Hobby: Reading or listening to music while lying in the hammock on the bank of the river.

Jennifer Sims Murray - Vice President (Open)



Years as a Teacher: 24, 1 as a released officer

ETFO Responsibilities: Jenn is our PD Fund Administrator and Chairs the Resolutions and Calendar Committees. She is the Committee Liaison for our Public Relations Chair, Social Chair, and Professional Development Chair. Jenn also is part of the LEAD Planning Team and writes our Bare Essentials Newsletters.

Favourite Educational Quote: "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." ~ Nelson Mandela

Favourite Hobby: Reading a great book, usually historical fiction, on her front porch.